

smallest town providing a night's free dinner, bed and breakfast for backpackers at the local hostelry. Unfortunately, that aspect of history seems to have been forgotten, too, and the intentions of the tobacco companies in promoting the idea, or more accurately, the image of travel to students today are far removed from those of the small town burghers of the early 20th century.

Russia: the lobbyist's art is alive and well

Turkmenistan recently became the first country in the former Soviet Union to ban smoking in all public places. Having been advised to stop smoking following heart surgery in 2000, President Saparmurat Niyazov, Turkmenistan's increasingly idiosyncratic and autocratic leader, introduced a fine—the equivalent of the minimum monthly wage—for anyone caught smoking in public.

Governments elsewhere in the former Soviet Union, however, seem to take a more lenient approach to smoking, taking their tobacco control cues from the industry rather than their health advisors. In Russia, for example, the industry must be content at its recent success in ensuring that the massive Russian market remains free of effective tobacco control legislation. Despite the best efforts of a fledgling tobacco control community, the new federal law on limiting tobacco consumption signed at the end of last year and being introduced in stages through 2002, was reduced from an effective bill to one simply serving the industry. In the words of a reporter on *The St Petersburg Times*, the changes made to the draft between the first and second readings were "a textbook demonstration of the lobbyist's art".

The ban on tobacco advertising included in the initial bill was removed when the industry argued that it should form a separate law. The single sentence the new legislation now affords this topic simply refers the reader to the federal law on advertising which in turn is complex and contradictory and will be impossible to enforce. Needless to say the previous 1995 tobacco advertising legislation was based on the industry's voluntary code of conduct and includes only minor restrictions on content and placement of outdoor adverts and the timing of broadcast adverts. The original draft of the new bill also banned smoking in movies but the familiar escape clause to allow smoking if it is

"an integral element of the artistic design" later crept in.

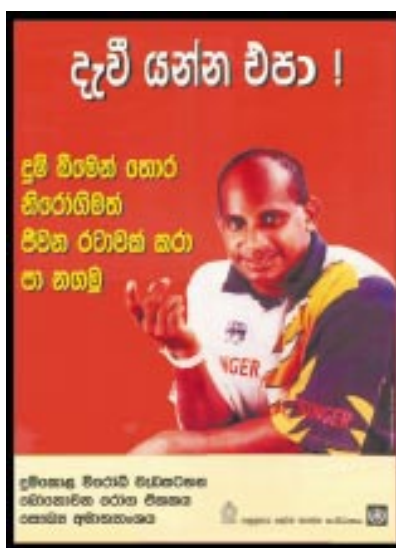
The most useful remaining aspects of the bill are a ban on the sale of single cigarettes and packs of less than 20, a ban on vending machine sales, and an enforcement of the previous voluntary agreement on health warnings. Some restrictions on public smoking are set out but unfortunately, no clear system of enforcement is specified.

Industry interests have triumphed once more. Russian streets will continue to be decorated with tobacco ads and the huge death toll that tobacco wreaks in Russia, as elsewhere in the former Soviet Union, looks set to continue.

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Sri Lanka: batting for health

In the face of the tobacco industry's incessant, high pressure promotion of smoking as a fashionable, desirable part of life for young people, health groups keep plugging away at the real message. One notable success was achieved earlier in the year when Sanath Jayasuriya, the Sri Lankan cricket captain, agreed to take part in a health ministry campaign against smoking. Under the headline 'Don't get yourself burnt!', Jayasuriya tells young people, the poster's target audi-



Sri Lankan cricket captain Sanath Jayasuriya telling young people "Let's walk towards a healthy lifestyle without smoking" in a health ministry campaign.



British American Tobacco (BAT) is continuing to promote its Sportsman brand in Kenya as if smoking it were an integral part of the country's development plan. Just as previous ads featured competitions to win a business (see *Tobacco Control* 2001;10:207), a recent ad offered prizes to benefit the winners' communities, to be presented in the winners' names, such as agricultural fertiliser, market stalls and kiosks, and even a new water supply for the village.

ence, "Let's walk towards a healthy lifestyle without smoking". Considering the national importance of cricket, originally introduced to the country along with cigarettes by Sri Lanka's former colonial rulers, the UK, this was a ball hit for six by an important new player for the health side.

France: seminar explodes under PM

It is gratifying when those outside the immediate community of tobacco control advocacy say it like it is. When in July Philip Morris (PM) invited French speaking, non-industry scientists from several European countries to a "scientific symposium" on PM's harm reduction programme to be held in November in Switzerland, it cannot have envisaged just how badly the publicity, a major goal of its attempted rehabilitation programme, could go wrong. Prominent in the French press was a call to boycott the all-expenses paid junkett. One of those behind the move, Professor Bertrand Dautzenberg, put it rather nicely: "The makers of anti-personnel landmines at least have the decency not to invite orthopaedic surgeons to a symposium to talk about the risks associated with their products, or to get the surgeons' thoughts on the subject."